U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division

Office of the Assistant Attorney General
Washington, D.C. 20530

October 19, 2026

The Honorable Muriel E. Bowser
Mayor
District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Re: Investigation of the District of Columbia Department of Corrections

Dear Mayor Bowser:

We write to inform you that the United States Department of Justice ("the Department") is commencing an investigation into the District of Columbia Department of Corrections ("DOC") facilities. The Department will conduct this investigation pursuant to its authority under the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act ("CRIPA"), 42 U.S.C. § 1997. This is official notice as required by statute.

During this investigation, the Department will determine whether the District of Columbia ("the District") engages in a pattern or practice of violating the constitutional rights of inmates and detainees held at DOC facilities by failing to protect them from use of excessive force, failing to provide adequate medical care, failing to provide safe and sanitary physical conditions of confinement, and by failing to provide adequate nutrition. The scope of the investigation will examine conditions of confinement for all D.C. jail inmates since January 1, 2021.

We have not reached any conclusions about the subject matter of this investigation. During the investigation, we will consider all relevant information, including the efforts the District has taken to ensure compliance with the Constitution. We encourage the District to cooperate with our investigation, and we assure you that we will seek to minimize any potential disruption our investigation may have on DOC operations.

If we ultimately determine that there are no constitutional violations, we will notify you that we are closing the investigation. If we determine that there are systemic violations, we will inform you of our findings and attempt to work with the DOC to remedy those violations. In our many years of civil rights enforcement, the good faith efforts of jurisdictions to work with us have routinely enabled us to resolve our claims without resorting to contested litigation.

Attorneys from the Civil Rights Division will be handling this investigation. They will contact your office to discuss next steps. Jonas Geissler, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, may be reached at jonas.geissler@usdoj.gov.

Regards,



Harmeet K. Dhillon
Assistant Attorney General

cc: Thomas Faust
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